

Woman of the Year *2018*



Monday, March 12, 2018



March 12, 2018

Dear Woman of the Year honoree:

You have received a significant honor, one that speaks to your unique contributions to the lives of your fellow Californians. The rarity of this award is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that only 120 women are honored by the California State Legislature each year in a state of nearly 40 million people.

You are also now part of a special sorority that has slowly grown since 1987, the first year that the Legislative Women's Caucus set aside a day in March, during Women's History Month, to host this celebration.

It has become a meaningful tradition and an anticipated rite of spring. The Assembly and Senate pause from its usual business to bestow accolades to encourage women of all ages to pursue a life that benefits others.

Thank you for participating today and we are pleased to honor you before an audience of your elected representatives, peers, family and friends.

We hope that you will take personal satisfaction in the receipt of this award. We also hope that you will display it in a way that encourages other women to weave themselves into the daily fabric of our lives. You are, in our estimation, much of what is best about the Golden State.

On these pages are your peers, the women like you, who in their own communities are also making a difference. We who serve you here in the State Capitol are honored that you have joined us and that you have accepted our commendation.

Respectfully,

Susan Talamantes Eggman
Assemblywoman, 13th District

Connie M. Leyva, Vice Chair
Senator, 20th District



CALIFORNIA
LEGISLATIVE
.....
WOMEN'S
CAUCUS



✧ Melanie Fowle ✧

Senator Ted Gaines (SD 1)

Melanie Fowle, a native of Siskiyou County, has made exemplary contributions throughout her career as an educator of four decades, dedicated mentor of California Future Farmers of America and 4-H, savvy businesswoman, and nationally-recognized agricultural leader. Whether working the ranch with her family, or leading the California and National CattleWomen organizations, Melanie has immeasurably bettered our community and touched countless lives.

✧ Naomi Fuchs ✧

Senator Mike McGuire (SD 2)

As CEO of Santa Rosa Community Health, Naomi Fuchs has been instrumental in bringing quality healthcare to low-income and medically underserved patients. Despite the destruction of Santa Rosa Community Health's largest campus during the 2017 North Bay Firestorm, Naomi's tireless work and creative leadership has ensured that crucial healthcare services remain accessible to Sonoma County's most vulnerable.





❧ Shana Jones ❧

Senator Bill Dodd (SD 3)

CAL FIRE Unit Chief Shana Jones was the Administrator overseeing three CAL FIRE Management Teams responding to the 2017 Wine Country Fires, the most destructive in California history. Chief Jones has demonstrated an incredible level of dedication and commitment to the safety and well-being of the people in California's 3rd Senate District.

❧ Mary C. Wells ❧

Senator Jim Nielsen (SD 4)

Mary Wells is a fifth generation California agriculturist, whose family has been living in Colusa County. Mary has spent 36 years farming and served as an employee, manager, board member, and officer of water districts and water advocacy organizations in Northern California. Since 1963, Mary has paved the way for women in agriculture.





✧ Harriet Salarno ✧

Senator Cathleen Galgiani (SD 5)

A graduate of USC and co-founder of Crime Victims United, Harriet has been a passionate advocate for crime victims' rights since 1983, fighting to ensure constitutional protections to victims of violent crimes and their families. Through Harriet's leadership, Crime Victims United is recognized as the Nation's most trusted victims' rights advocacy group.

✧ Diane Littlefield ✧

Senator Dr. Richard Pan (SD 6)

Diane Littlefield is Vice President of Programs and Partnerships for Sierra Health Foundation, a private philanthropy focused on promoting health and racial equity. Through her work, she has helped harness the collective power of people working together. Her tireless efforts have helped improve the lives of young people and communities experiencing disproportionate poor health.





✧ Alissa Friedman ✧

Senator Steven M. Glazer (SD 7)

Alissa Friedman is the Executive Director for Opportunity Junction. Under Alissa's leadership, the organization has fought poverty by helping low-income residents find jobs. Alissa, through her work, lives by the adage that the highest form of charity is helping others do for themselves.

✧ Maria Swanson ✧

Senator Tom Berryhill (SD 8)

Maria is a wife and mother of four. Her philanthropic work includes support of non-profit community centers where hope, meals, and a safe place are provided for needy families. She lends her time and talent in her belief that her community thrives when the next generation is given the opportunity to succeed.





🌀 Violeta Alvarez 🌀

Senator Nancy Skinner (SD 9)

Violeta Alvarez is cofounder and Executive Director of the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) at UC Berkeley. It is the first peer-led academic support program for formerly incarcerated students in a top-tier research university. Formerly incarcerated herself, Violeta had many challenges that she had to overcome, including dropping out of high school, becoming pregnant at an early age and at one point facing a long prison sentence. After her incarceration, Violeta vowed to forge a different path for herself and her son through education. Enrolling at UC Berkeley, where she founded

Underground Scholars.

🌀 Alanna Robin Powell 🌀

Senator Bob Wieckowski (SD 10)

Alanna Robin Powell founded Boldly Me in 2012, a non-profit that helps those who suffer from trauma as a result of physical differences. Built upon her personal experience with Alopecia Universalis, Boldly Me educates and mentors children so that they meet their potential. Her organization has served over 17,000 children.





🌀 Veronica Hunnicutt 🌀

Senator Scott D. Wiener (SD 11)

Dr. Veronica Hunnicutt has committed her life and career to helping students and women, while striving to constantly better the lives of San Franciscans. Today, we recognize her hard work and tremendous contributions, through her involvement with countless organizations and advocacy on behalf of her community.

🌀 Erica Ayala 🌀

Senator Anthony Cannella (SD 12)

Erica was born and raised in the Central Valley, the heart of California. She has earned a double Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Gender Studies from the California State University, Stanislaus and a Master of Arts in Leadership from Saint Mary's College of California, where she penned her thesis, "Invest and Empower Young Women of Today."





❧ Stephanie Martinson ❧

Senator Jerry Hill (SD 13)

Stephanie Martinson is the founder and President of Racing Hearts Foundation, a nonprofit that advocates for the deployment of AEDs in every school, gym and public space. She also works as a speech pathologist at the Palo Alto VA Hospital and was appointed to the Santa Clara County National Guard and Veterans Affairs Commission.

❧ Robin Brassfield-Cooper ❧

Senator Andy Vidak (SD 14)

Robin Brassfield-Cooper of Bakersfield, is a small business owner and leader in the oil industry. She also created an organization that provides opportunities and assistance to Kern County high school students who have demonstrated an interest in pursuing higher academic learning after completing high school, and for those who have an interest in, or a connection to, the oil and gas, agriculture, construction, utility and energy industries.





✧ Sharon Hare ✧

Senator Jim Beall (SD 15)

Sharon Hare is the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of San Jose where she oversees Lifted Spirits, a drop-in center for at-risk women. Sharon has had an enduring interest and passion for service for people at the margins of society. Sharon is the mother of an adopted daughter, Michele, and is a native of Concord, California, currently residing in San Jose, California.

✧ Lili Marsh ✧

Senator Jean Fuller (SD 16)

When national tragedies strike—Lili Marsh inspires and motivates people to follow their hearts and give freely for worthy causes. When our troops need assistance—Lili Marsh is there to support them and their families. And, when our Heroes need to know We Will Never Forget their sacrifice—Lili Marsh is there to remind them.





✧ Jennifer Adams ✧

Majority Leader William W. Monning (SD 17)

Jennifer Adams is the Executive Director of RISE (Respect, Inspire, Support, Empower), a nonprofit organization in San Luis Obispo County that seeks to transform the lives of sexual and intimate partner violence survivors, their families and the community through services and education that promotes safety, healing and empowerment. Ms. Adams is a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo alumnus, and lives on the Central Coast.

✧ Diana M. Sanchez ✧

Senator Robert M. Hertzberg (SD 18)

Diana Sanchez is an esteemed resident of the San Fernando Valley. For over 25 years, she has worked in the marketing, public, and community relations field. She is currently the Public and Community Relations Director for Van Nuys Airport. She also participates in neighborhood clean ups and fundraisers for organizations like the National Kidney Foundation.





✧ Helene Schneider ✧

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (SD 19)

Helene Schneider focuses her career on connecting people, policies and funding towards positive social change. She is the Regional Coordinator for the US Interagency Council on Homelessness and a Regional Development Director for California State University, Channel Islands. As Santa Barbara's 49th Mayor, Schneider focused on a reliable water supply system, environmental resiliency, reducing homelessness and the cultural arts.

✧ Karen DiCarlo ✧

Senator Connie M. Leyva (SD 20)

As Executive Director of Santa Claus, Inc., Karen takes her job with one of Southern California's largest and oldest non-profit charities serving impoverished youth very seriously. Under her leadership she has grown the organization more than 500 percent from serving 18,000 children at Christmas in 2012 to now serving over 105,000 children throughout the year.





✧ Marlee Means Lauffer ✧

Senator Scott Wilk (SD 21)

Marlee Lauffer is President of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital Foundation; which oversees its extensive awareness and fundraising programs. Marlee is deeply involved with the local business, civic and nonprofit community and is a long-time volunteer advisor for many organizations in the Santa Clarita Valley.

✧ Norma Edith Garcia ✧

Senator Ed Hernandez, O.D. (SD 22)

The daughter of immigrants, Norma Edith Garcia's distinguished public service career has taken her from being a youth park leader to the first woman Chief Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, one of the largest park systems in the Country. She also went from being the first to go to college in her family to serving on the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees. Today's recognition also falls on her birthday of March 12th.





✧ Shelley Burnach ✧

Senator Mike Morrell (SD 23)

San Bernardino resident Shelley Burnach is a dedicated volunteer who, along with her family, is committed to serving communities throughout the Inland Empire. She gives time and resources to several regional causes, including Friends of Santa Claus, Inc. and is a founding board member of Women of Dignity Health.

✧ Cristina Ramirez Vazquez ✧

President pro Tempore Kevin de León (SD 24)

For the last 42 years, Cristina Ramirez Vazquez has dedicated her life to the labor movement. She started as a union organizer in 1976 and rose through the ranks of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). Since then, the ILGWU merged with other unions to become Workers United where Cristina served as International Vice-President. She is a champion for immigrant working families and has negotiated living wages and benefits for thousands of workers in California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico.





✧ Yasmin Beers ✧

Senator Anthony J. Portantino (SD 25)

Yasmin Beers is the newly appointed City Manager of the City of Glendale. She is the first woman city manager for the city. Previously she was the Assistant City Manager serving as the Chief Operating Officer overseeing 1,600 employees. She was responsible for city-wide budget oversight, employee relations, the Capitol Improvement Program and policy management. She has served the City for over 31 years starting with the City Library Department during her high

school years and climbing up the ranks to the position she holds today. Yasmin is a seasoned professional in her career, a mother at heart and a woman who is passionate about the community she serves.

✧ Rashida Leah Jones ✧

Senator Benjamin Allen (SD 26)

Rashida Jones is an accomplished writer, actress, director, producer, activist and philanthropist. Beloved for her role as Ann Perkins on “Parks and Recreation.” Ms. Jones also uses her many talents to advocate on behalf of women and girls around the world, through documentary filmmaking and political advocacy.





✧ Betsy Connolly ✧

Senator Henry I. Stern (SD 27)

Betsy Connolly is a mother, educator, trained veterinarian, and a voice for diversity and excellence on the Conejo Valley School District Board. She has been fighting tirelessly to protect the quality of our local K-12 education and the integrity of the school system itself as a place welcome to bold ideas and tolerance for diverse perspectives.

✧ Tammy Wilson ✧

Senator Jeff Stone, Pharm. D. (SD 28)

Tammy Wilson is the hands-on CEO of Oak Grove Center. Her personal investment in each child's success is what makes her so special. Whether it's raising funds to help children around the world or serving as a volunteer in her community—Tammy is always a tremendous role model who leads by example.





✧ Catherine Ward ✧

Senator Josh Newman (SD 29)

Catherine Ward is the Interim Director of California State University, Fullerton's Veterans Resource Center. Using a strengths-based perspective, her work focuses on developing innovative programs that support the personal, academic, and professional success of student veterans, is an advocate for women veterans, and strives to build a more compassionate community.

✧ Negest “Nikki” Legesse ✧

Senator Holly J. Mitchell (SD 30)

Negest “Nikki” Legesse is the Executive Director of Little Ethiopia Cultural and Resource Center. She is a project leader of Ethiopian Community Development, a project of Community Partners. She is president of her own company Legesse Enterprises. She is a commissioner on the City of Los Angeles Commission of Community & Family Services.





✧ Kathy Michalak ✧

Senator Richard D. Roth (SD 31)

Kathy Michalak is the Executive Director of the Riverside Habitat for Humanity. Kathy is dedicated to helping low income families including veterans realize the dream of owning a home through her work with Habitat for Humanity. Her passion and drive inspires the community of Riverside to unite and build a stronger future together.

✧ Nancy Lee ✧

Senator Ricardo Lara (SD 33)

Nancy Lee is a Cambodian genocide survivor, philanthropist, and dedicated volunteer. She is the president of the Dream Beyond Foundation, which provides scholarships to underserved Southeast Asian American youth and facilitates healthy recreational and physical activities, workshops, and ESL classes for elderly Cambodians in Long Beach.





🌀 Adela Montañez 🌀

Senator Janet Nguyen (SD 34)

For more than two decades, Adela Montañez has been an agent of change in underserved communities by empowering residents through education, promoting health and wellness initiatives, and advocating for policy solutions. Adela leads by example and her work has undoubtedly made the 34th District a better, healthier place.

🌀 Lorraine C. Grey 🌀

Senator Steven Bradford (SD 35)

For the last 30 years Ms. Grey has served as a fixture in the health professions community, and has also served as Director of the Saturday Science Academy at Charles Drew University, where under her leadership 90 percent of graduates from the program pursue higher education with an emphasis on medical careers.





🌀 Donna Kalez 🌀

Minority Leader Patricia C. Bates (SD 36)

Donna Kalez is the managing partner of Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching, which has locations in Dana Point and Oceanside. Since 1961, Dana Wharf has been a leader on whale watching tours and sustainable sportfishing. Donna is an active community member, recognized for her work on behalf of many non-profits. One of her priorities is introducing children to the wonders of our oceans and coastal environment.

🌀 Ruth Tang Ding 🌀

Senator John M. W. Moorlach (SD 37)

Ruth Ding has been a fixture in the Orange County philanthropic community for more than fifty years. A daughter of immigrants, Ruth has spent her life working hard to help others achieve the American dream. Among her countless accomplishments, she is well known as a founding member of the Orange County Performing Arts Center and is a tireless advocate in advancing educational artistic causes.





✧ Paula Jansen ✧

Senator Joel Anderson (SD 38)

Paula is a humble California native. After 21 years of service Paula retired from the U.S. Navy. Paula was awarded the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for her tireless volunteer efforts. In 2017, Paula became the first female Post Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5867. She lives by the motto "Service First."

✧ Vicki D. Granowitz ✧

Senator Toni G. Atkins (SD 39)

For nearly two decades, Vicki Granowitz has been a leader in community collaboration – devising neighborhood plans, setting development goals and policies as a planning commissioner, and more. She's risen above a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, gracefully assuming the burdens and rewards of leadership, while making San Diego a better place.





🌀 Sarah Brite Evans 🌀

Senator Ben Hueso (SD 40)

Sarah is a true asset to the 40th Senate District. She moves seamlessly between her professional role as one of San Diego Business Journal's "Best of the Bar," to her civic responsibilities, where she serves as Chair of the Board of Management for the Border View Family YMCA.

California State Senate

**SENATOR
TED GAINES**
FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
VICE CHAIR
INSURANCE
VICE CHAIR
GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
TRANSPORTATION AND
HOUSING

Woman of the Year 2018 Melanie Fowle

Melanie Fowle grew up on her family's 5,000 acre cattle ranch in a remote area of Siskiyou County, riding her horse about 8 miles to a one-room schoolhouse. She graduated from high school in Etna, attended Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo and majored in History with a minor in English. She was one of a few women at that time competing on the Livestock Judging Team for Cal Poly, and brought home the 1st place individual award from the national competition. Melanie and her husband Ken returned to Siskiyou County around 1974, and she was hired almost immediately to teach at Etna High School. There, she taught English, History, and Civics for 39 years and served as the high school career counselor.

Melanie and Ken raised Angus and Hereford cattle, in addition to Hampshire and Suffolk sheep. Melanie has been very hands-on in the operation of the ranch, doing everything from irrigating, vaccinating and caring for livestock, as well as marketing the animals to bull buyers and other purchasers. The operation still actively includes their son Jeff, daughter-in-law Erin, and grandson Kyle.

Besides working on the ranch and teaching, Melanie was a 4-H leader for over 30 years, and helped coach the winning Etna 4-H livestock judging team for approximately 18 years. She also coached FFA speeches, judged parli-pro and livestock, and coached for the Academic Decathlon. She was the director and president of the Scott Valley Scholarship program for 18 years, and along with Ken, served as advisors for the California Jr. Hereford Association for 18 years.

Besides her work with children, Melanie has also served as president of the Northern CA 4-H region, National Hereford Auxiliary, Siskiyou County CattleWomen, California CattleWomen and the American National CattleWomen organizations.

Among her many awards and special recognitions, Melanie was the 2016 Siskiyou County CattleWoman of the Year, the Cow Palace 'Cattle Queen of the Year,' the 2012 American National CattleWomen 'Educator of the Year', and was granted the 2003 Star Counselor Award from the California Future Farmers of America Association. She has also been recognized as the California U.S. History Teacher of the Year.


Senator Ted Gaines, First District



Woman of the Year 2018

Naomi Fuchs

Naomi Fuchs is the Chief Executive Officer for Santa Rosa Community Health (SRCH), a nonprofit of federally qualified community health centers in Santa Rosa, California. She has served in this role since 2001.

Under Naomi's leadership, Santa Rosa Community Health has grown from serving 5,000 patients in one location to 50,000 patients at eleven service delivery sites--one in four people in Santa Rosa receive their care at Santa Rosa Community Health! Under her leadership, SRCH has expanded programs to include a school-based clinic, a behavioral health program, and an outpatient residency teaching site for 36 family medicine residents. In 2010, SRCH purchased and expanded into Vista Campus, a state-of-the-art health care facility; in 2011, opened Brookwood Campus to provide health care to people who are homeless; and in 2012, opened a Pediatrics Campus. In 2014, SRCH opened a 14-operator dental clinic to serve low-income, Medi-Cal, and uninsured patients. SRCH recently opened the Dutton Campus, which will integrate medical, dental, and mental health services, as well as provide primary care specialty services for people with developmental disabilities.

In October 2017, the northern California wildfires destroyed SRCH's Vista Campus, which was the medical home for 24,000 patients. As part of the response and recovery plan, SRCH expanded capacity at all existing locations and opened two new temporary health centers: Fiesta Campus and Airway Campus. By January 2018, SRCH was at 90% of previous capacity.

Naomi is passionate about transforming health care so that all people have the same opportunity for a full and healthy life. To that end, she participates in numerous county-wide, state, and national organizations and stakeholder committees, including the Redwood Community Health Coalition, Health Action, California Primary Care Association, and the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Naomi earned her degree in Anthropology from Wesleyan University in Connecticut and her MBA from Sonoma State University in California. Naomi and her husband have four grown children, three grandchildren, and live in Sebastopol, California.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McGuire".

MIKE MCGUIRE
State Senator

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California State Senate

BILL DODD

SENATOR, THIRD DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS
TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING
SELECT COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA'S WINE INDUSTRY
CO-CHAIR

CHAIR: SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Woman of the Year 2018 CAL FIRE Unit Chief Shana Jones

CAL FIRE Unit Chief Shana Jones began her career working for the US Forest Service in both forest management and fire protection. After graduating from college, Chief Jones worked for consulting firms responsible for timber management, Natural Resource Damage Assessment, and oil spill response. Shana joined CAL FIRE in 2000 in the Resource Management Program as a Forester. In 2004, she made the transition to Fire Protection as the Assistant Chief of Administration in the Santa Clara Unit and two years later transferred to be the Assistant Chief of the East Bay Division managing Fire Operations in Alameda, Contra Costa, Western San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.

In 2012, Chief Jones was promoted to the position of Northern Region Staff Chief of Management Services for CAL FIRE overseeing all financial and personnel management functions for the 12 northern CAL FIRE Units. In 2016, Chief Jones transferred to the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit as the Unit Chief where she serves today. Chief Jones is responsible for overseeing all CAL FIRE functions within Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Colusa, Yolo, and Solano Counties, as well as serving as the Department's liaison administrator for the Contract County of Marin. She has been part of the curriculum development team and is a member of the Advanced All-Hazards Incident Management (AAIM) cadre. This program hones the skills of current and future Incident Management Team members on dealing with a multitude of complex incidents they may face as a Type 1 Incident Management Team.

For over ten years, Chief Jones was assigned to a CAL FIRE Type 1 Incident Management Team working in the Plans Section and as a Liaison Officer until promoting to Staff Chief in 2012. Throughout her career, Chief Jones has been assigned to various All-Hazard incidents. Most recently, she served as the Agency Administrator for the October 2017 Fire Siege overseeing three CAL FIRE Type I Incident Management Teams who managed the response to the fires in Sonoma, Lake, Napa, and Solano Counties. The recovery effort for these fires, the most destructive in California history, continues with Chief Jones and her staff assisting where needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Dodd".

BILL DODD

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California State Senate



**SENATOR
JIM NIELSEN**

FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
VICE CHAIR
HEALTH
VETERANS AFFAIRS
VICE CHAIR

Woman of the Year 2018 Mary C. Wells

Mary is the fifth generation of a California farming and ranching family. She grew up on a cattle ranch in Merced, CA. Mary paved the way for women in agriculture as the first female student in the Merced Unified School District to complete the vocational agricultural curriculum and to receive the Bank of America award in agriculture. A graduate of Cal-Poly, San Luis Obispo in 1967, with a degree in Farm Management/Ag Economics, Mary was the third female graduate in that major. Her 36 years of irrigation district staff work and board service began in 1977 as the first employee of Westside Water District.

Her job began as Chief Financial Officer through construction of the district's system and then progressed to General Manager of the District until 1998. She was an advocate for the water user issues in the drafting of the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act and the interim renewal contract negotiations in 1994. Mary then served as a director on Westside's Board for six years.

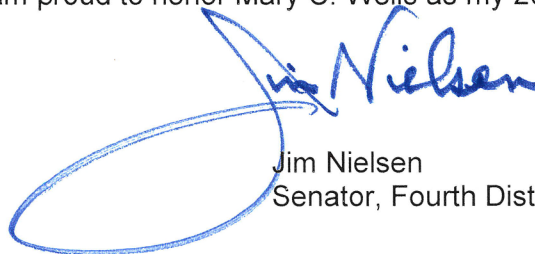
In addition Mary held the position of Administrator for Maxwell Irrigation District (MID) for four years beginning in 1986 and then later was appointed to the MID Board of Directors where she led the successful restructuring of the District's long-term debt retirement, the exploration of conjunctive use and water use efficiency projects. She then stepped down from MID's Board to fill the position of General Manager until 2010. She created and filled the position of joint-manager of MID and Westside Water District which still exists today following her retirement in 2010.

Mary also served on the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority Board for twenty years with a focus on resolving Red Bluff Diversion Dam fish passage and reinitiating Sites Reservoir. As one of the founding directors of Northern California Water Association (NCWA), from 1992 to 2007, she served as Secretary/Treasurer to the Board and held the office of Chairman from 2001 to 2007. Last year NCWA celebrated its 25th year with a generational testimonial video honoring its founding directors. Daughter Jamie was one of the featured "next generation" leaders carrying on their parent's vision for the Sacramento Valley.

Following the passing of her husband, Charles, in 2016, she is carrying on with her rice farming, almond and rangeland enterprises. Other activities included twelve years as a 4-H horse leader, twelve years on the Maxwell Unified School District Board, and twenty years of softball.

Three years ago after 5 years of retirement, Mary was appointed once again to the MID Board, and currently serves as Chairperson. With that appointment also came the responsibility of being seated on the Sites Authority Board, lead agency for the construction and operation of the proposed Sites Reservoir.

On behalf of Fourth Senate District, I am proud to honor Mary C. Wells as my 2018 Woman of the Year.


Jim Nielsen
Senator, Fourth District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
CATHLEEN GALGIANI
FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



STANDING COMMITTEES

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ORGANIZATION

INSURANCE, BANKING
& FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Woman of the Year 2018 Harriet Salarno

September 3, 1979 changed forever the lives of Harriet Salarno and her family. Their eldest daughter, Catina Rose Salarno, was senselessly murdered 'execution style' at the University of the Pacific in Stockton on her first day of school. She was only 18 years old. In the years that followed, the Salarno family endured the frustrations of a criminal justice system that tilted too heavily toward preserving criminal rights while barely addressing the rights and needs of victims and victims' families. Crime Victims United was born from Harriet Salarno's passion to fix this problem and ensure that no victims' family would again experience the anguish of fighting their own criminal justice system.

Through Harriet's leadership, Crime Victims United grew quickly and is today recognized as the nation's most trusted victims' rights advocacy group. In 1982, Harriet co-chaired the Crime Victims Bill of Rights effort, establishing a historic turning point for victims of crime and setting off a national wave of states enacting similar laws. Since then, Harriet has been instrumental in bringing fundamental change to various states' criminal justice systems.

In 2008, Harriet helped rally victims' groups to assist in the passage of Marsy's Law constitutional amendment ballot measure, which added 17 specific victims and victims families' rights into the California Constitution. This victory represented the first time that any state constitution had specifically addressed and protected victims' rights. Harriet has also spearheaded the multiple battles to save California's death penalty from being abolished. A graduate of the University of Southern California, Harriet was appointed by former Governor Pete Wilson to the California Council on Criminal Justice, the State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, the Commission on Judicial Performance and was appointed by former San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan to the City's Juvenile Justice Probation Commission. In 1982, Harriet worked closely with Justice Lois Herrington who headed President Reagan's landmark Task Force on Crime Victims, to help develop nearly two dozen essential policy recommendations to strengthen rights of victims and their families.

Harriet is also a past recipient of the Doris Tate Governor's Award and was previously named California State Assembly "Woman of the Year" by Assemblyman John Burton. In 2006 Harriet received special recognition from the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation at Project 2000 XVII for her dedication to Crime Victims United of California and her active pursuit of its goals. She is the 2006 winner of the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association John Wayne Award and was awarded the Golden Badge Foundation Victim's Advocate Award in 2006. Harriet was also awarded the Association of Deputy District Attorneys 2006 Pursuit of Justice Award, and was given a U.S. Department of Justice Certificate of Appreciation in 1993.

Harriet's national leadership includes appearances on "Nightline" and "48 Hours" and has been the subject of articles in Woman's Day and Ladies Home Journal. She has worked on several propositions in the state of California that call for protection of victim rights. Harriet Salarno lives in the greater Sacramento area, California where she directs the staff and legal team at Crime Victims United's national office.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathleen Galgiani".

Cathleen Galgiani
State Senate, 5th District

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#3 ON HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
HEALTH
EDUCATION
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2018

Diane Littlefield

Diane Littlefield is Vice President of Programs and Partnerships for Sierra Health Foundation, a private philanthropy focused on promoting health and racial equity and a healthful life for all people in the Northern and Central California region through partnership and innovation. The foundation uses a social determinants of health lens and employs a broad spectrum of approaches to support community leadership, organizing and movement building, policy and advocacy and inter-sectoral efforts to improve health and well-being.

As a member of the executive team, Diane is responsible for strategic program and partnership development, and oversees management of the foundation's programs and policy initiatives. She has a special interest in advancing social justice and addressing health disparities, and believes strongly in the collective power of people working toward health equity.

Diane worked for more than 20 years in the nonprofit and public community health sector in the Coastal and Central Valleys before joining Sierra Health Foundation. She has a bachelor's degree in Nutrition Science from U.C. Davis, and a master's degree in Public Health from U.C. Berkeley.

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California State Senate

SENATOR
STEVEN M. GLAZER
SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

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HUMAN SERVICES
INSURANCE

SUBCOMMITTEE
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE 4



Senator Steven M. Glazer
SENATOR, SEVENTH DISTRICT

Woman of the Year 2018 **Alissa Friedman**

Alissa Friedman is Executive Director of Opportunity Junction and has overseen its growth from a pilot workforce development program into a local hub for training, education, and job placement. Located in Antioch, in East Contra Costa County, Opportunity Junction's mission is to fight poverty by helping low-income Contra Costa residents gain the skills and confidence to get and keep jobs that support themselves and their families.

Alissa joined Opportunity Junction in 2001 as Project Manager and took over as Executive Director in 2003. Under her leadership, the organization was awarded the 2012 Neighborhood Builders Award from Bank of America, the 2013 Tipping Point Award, Antioch Nonprofit of the Year in 2014, and the Chair of the Board Award in 2017.

Alissa came to Opportunity Junction with an extensive background in management, technology development, and law. Before joining the organization, she worked in software development for eight years, as an attorney at Morrison & Foerster for two years, and as managing partner of the law firm of Friend & Friedman for five years. Originally from Evanston, Illinois, she holds a bachelor's degree in physics from Harvard University and a J.D. from U.C. Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law.

In 2004, Alissa completed a fellowship with the Women's Policy Institute and helped draft and successfully advocate for S.B. 1639, the Education Works! Bill. She has served as a Commissioner on the Contra Costa County Commission for Women, which advises the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting women and girls in the county. She was the 2009 recipient of the Pittsburg Soroptimist' "Making a Difference for Women Award, and she is a former Editor-in-Chief of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*.

Alissa also has a long history of LGBT and civil rights activism and served from 2009 to 2012 on the Board of Directors for the Spectrum LGBT Center of the North Bay. She is the author of "The Necessity for State Recognition of Same-Sex Marriage," published in 1987 in the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*.

Alissa says it best, "I get the deepest possible satisfaction from hearing 'I love my job' from an alum who pops in for a visit. I smile and reply, 'so do I.' My favorite times are when we're tackling a challenge, and each of us contributes ideas from our own perspective. There's the sense of shared purpose and camaraderie. From childhood, I've believed that this work represents the highest form of charity: helping others do for themselves." Thank you, Alissa Friedman for bringing your extensive professional and educational background to the service of others in Senate District 7 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Glazer".

Steven M. Glazer
Senator, 7th District

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California State Senate

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TOM BERRYHILL
EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT

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VICE CHAIR
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VICE CHAIR
AGRICULTURE
INSURANCE
RULES

Woman of the Year 2018 Maria Swanson

Maria Swanson is a lovely, outgoing woman whose philanthropic view is one of quiet service to both her church and her community.

Born and raised in Hilmar to parents who own a thriving dairy, Maria learned the value of hard work, common sense, business skills, and family values. She and her husband Matt, have four children and one son in law, and attend Monte Vista Chapel in Turlock, where they reside. This year they will celebrate their second daughter, Savannah, graduating from Pepperdine University with a Science degree.

Maria's interests, passions, and involvements include spending time, resources and her talent to support non-profit community centers where hope, meals, and a safe place are provided for needy families. The children from these families are shown that they are valued, loved and can contribute to their community. The Turlock Pregnancy Center, another of Maria's passions gives girls options other than abortion. Real positive changes that benefit not just the person but the community can be seen in the lives of these young women.

Maria believes that education when coupled with Christian values, allows the child to be a strong capable, contributing member of society. Because of her interior designing talents, the Turlock Christian Elementary school is housed in a new state of the art facility that opened in January 2017. The facility is technologically advanced with large vivid personal computers to create an interactive environment that help children stay focused and learn more effectively.

The state of the art iMac, video, tech, science and robotics lab help reinforce top 21st century thinking. The school's program is designed to give children both the academic foundation they will need for their future and the spiritual footing that will give true meaning to everything they learn. Maria made sure to include music, band, technology, including a green screen room, where students can make movies, and a robotics room, where they can play with and learn science in a fun way. Her vision to embrace and advance new teaching methods to help children learn can be seen in every classroom.

Maria helps where she can without the expectation of accolades, because she believes that her community is one that thrives when the next generation is given the chance and the opportunity to succeed.

While her family and husband's businesses keep her busy, she always makes time for friends and those in need. Maria is a modern day woman whose greatest desire is to share the news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone.



Tom Berryhill
Senator, 8th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
NANCY SKINNER

MAJORITY WHIP
NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



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BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
SUBCOMMITTEE 5:
PUBLIC SAFETY & LABOR

COMMITTEES
ENERGY, UTILITIES &
COMMUNICATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

Woman of the Year 2018 Violeta Alvarez

Violeta Alvarez is the cofounder and Executive Director of the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) at UC Berkeley. The Underground Scholars Initiative, the first peer-led academic support program for formerly incarcerated students in a top-tier research university, is dedicated to building a “prison to higher education pipeline”. Since its launch three years ago, USI has served almost 50 students, 30 of whom have successfully graduated. Of the USI scholars who have graduated, 1/3 have been accepted into masters and doctoral programs at other prestigious institutions.

After her own incarceration Violeta enrolled at UC Berkeley where she founded USI. Violeta was raised by her mother who often worked two jobs to care for Violeta and her two siblings. At age 13, Violeta became involved with gangs and began misusing alcohol and drugs. She ended up in juvenile hall, dropped out of school at 17, ultimately finding herself pregnant and facing ten years in prison before her 20th birthday. At this point Violeta decided to turn her life around, committing to make education the path out of poverty for herself and her son. She completed her high school diploma, earned an AA degree with honors, and transferred to UC Berkeley. In 2016 she completed her Political Science degree with a minor in Ethnic Studies, and is currently awaiting response to law school.

As Director of USI, Violeta organizes support for students with troubled pasts. She provides direct counseling and resources to more than 35 Underground Scholars, empowering them with the information and skills to navigate UC Berkeley’s labyrinth of programs. In 2016 she and her peers secured a \$500,000 state allocation to sustain their groundbreaking efforts. She has proven herself an extremely capable and respected advocate in discussions with University administrators, donors, and public officials. Violeta ensures that students in the Underground Scholars Initiative are prepared, ready to share their stories of success, and engaged in the discussion about appropriate policy solutions for the formerly incarcerated in academic settings.

Violeta works tirelessly to implement similar programs for formerly-incarcerated students at local community colleges. She has expanded USI’s Ambassador program, which trains formerly-incarcerated community college students to assist their peers transfer to the UC system. With Violeta’s help USI’s Ambassador program has expanded to 16 Ambassadors at 13 community colleges throughout California. She also mentors inmates at San Quentin, serving as an inspiration and guide for opportunities available after incarceration. Additionally she is a Student Member at JusticeCorps, where she provides legal guidance to self-represented litigants at self-help clinics throughout Contra Costa County.

Violeta’s dedication to resisting recidivism and her perseverance through higher education to advance herself and her son stand as powerful testimony to the tenacity Violeta brings to everything she sets out to accomplish. I am proud to select Violeta Alvarez as my nominee for Senate District 9’s California State Legislature 2018 Woman of the Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Skinner".

Nancy Skinner
State Senator, District 9

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BOB WIECKOWSKI

SENATOR, TENTH DISTRICT

Woman of the Year 2018 Alanna Robin Powell

Alanna Robin Powell is the founder of Boldly Me - a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps people who feel different learn to love and accept themselves as they naturally are. The organization she built helps people by educating, supporting, and mentoring children and their families so that they each meet their own unique potential.

Alanna's desire to help people who suffer from trauma as a result of physical differences due to birth conditions, injury, disease and medical treatments comes from personal experience. She was two years old when she developed Alopecia Universalis (an illness causing total hair loss), which affected her mental and emotional health as she got older. Later, as a wife and mother, the illness continued to take a toll on her. She felt as if she could not fulfill her potential because of its destructive, debilitating impact to her self-esteem, which, in turn, affected her husband and three children.

In 2012, she decided to take charge of her life and fully accept her illness. In doing so, she realized how she could use her personal experience to help others suffering with physical differences and low self-esteem. After much soul-searching, she left her job as a highly-regarded electrical engineer and technical program and engineering manager at Yahoo!. She stopped wearing wigs, refused to allow her physical differences to dominate her decisions and hold her hostage to the fear of rejection by society. Alanna then formulated cognitive and dialectical behavioral therapy skills training models to help herself and her immediate family. She knew this model could help many others who suffered from looking and feeling different.

Alanna's story of struggling with baldness her entire life and overcoming the emotional trauma caused by feeling different is the catalyst for training people how to "Become the Hero of Their Own Story."

Alanna's leadership positively impacts the community by providing three major resources. First, a highly integrated and innovative educational program quickly identifies people's behavioral & mental health needs. Additionally, experts from professional and diverse business, education, & healthcare backgrounds provide expertise in building sustainable solutions. Finally, the community benefits from accessibility & scalability by reiterating training provided using creative technology, infrastructure, and processes.

Boldly Me holds strong partnerships with hospital and school systems to help design, develop, and deliver "best in class" programs that quickly address community needs. Boldly Me engages children and their families so lives are significantly altered through healthy reprogramming. The program is designed to empower youth to unleash their creativity and use the Boldly Me skills they learn to educate their peers on how to solve immediate problems in their community. Because children and teens feel very comfortable and safe sharing their problems with Alanna, she can quickly help them attain skills to stop ineffective thoughts and dangerous behaviors. Her organization has saved 160 lives that we know of and served over 17,000 children since 2012.

Alanna was born in 1972 at Sutter Memorial Hospital in Sacramento, CA. She is married to Jason Edward Powell and is the mother of 3 children- Tyler, Amanda, & Rebecca. Alanna is the daughter of Jenghis John Sah (aka "Empire John") and Loretta Janice Sah. Alanna resides in Fremont, California.

On behalf of State Senate District 10, I am delighted to honor Alanna Robin Powell as my 2018 Woman of the Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Wieckowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Bob Wieckowski
Senator, 10th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
SCOTT WIENER

威善高
ELEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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COMMUNICATIONS
PUBLIC SAFETY
TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

Woman of the Year 2018 Veronica Hunnicutt

Veronica Hunnicutt, the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of the Hunnicutt Group, Inc.-- a community organization rooted in the empowerment and transformation of individuals within San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area--has been an unyielding force for the betterment of others. For over 41 years, she served as the Dean at the Office of Student Affairs, as well as the Dean of the Southeast Campus at the City College of San Francisco. She further integrated herself within the campus community through her roles as both Chair of the African American Studies Department and as an Instructor in the English and Engineering Departments.

Dr. Hunnicutt also co-founded the African American Achievement Program (A.A.A.P.) and developed the original Afrocentric English materials used in A.A.A.P. classes at CCSF. She has created activities, courses, and programs for students of all ages in the course of her professional career. As Dean of the Southeast Campus, she lobbied for and was successful in getting entry-level biotechnology courses, leading to jobs in related businesses and organizations for community residents and other students.

She has extensive community organizing and development experience and has served on the Mayor's Citizens' Advisory Committee for Community Development, as well as a board member of the San Francisco Mental Health Association, the Opportunity Industrialization Center (O.I.C.), the Center for Public Education, the Bayview YMCA, and Communities in Schools. She presently serves as the Chair of the Hunters Point Shipyard Citizens Advisory Committee (HPSCAC).

After being appointed by Mayor George Moscone as a Commissioner on the Commission on the Status of Women, Dr. Hunnicutt's passion for women's advocacy became an integral part of her career. She helped in founding the Alliance for Girls, continues to be an active member of It's Time Network, a gender equality group, and is a legacy member of the Powerful Women International Connections (PWIC).

Dr. Hunnicutt's titles and achievements merely touch upon the impacts and influence she has had on the community. She is a beacon of inspiration for women, and is the embodiment of someone who is committed to serving others with humility, integrity, and compassion.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wiener".

SCOTT WIENER
State Senator, 11th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
ANTHONY CANNELLA
TWELFTH SENATE DISTRICT



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ENERGY, UTILITIES &
COMMUNICATIONS
GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION

Woman of the Year 2018 Erica Ayala

Erica was born and raised in the Central Valley, the heart of California. She has earned a double Bachelor of the Arts degree in Communication and Gender Studies from the California State University, Stanislaus and a Masters of Arts in Leadership from Saint Mary's College of California, where she penned her thesis, "Invest and Empower Young Women of Today." She is passionate about education access for all, youth development, and working with marginalized communities. She works as a Project Manager in Juvenile Dependency, advocating for Foster Youth's Education Rights and Success in San Joaquin County. She is the Founder and Executive Director of Invest in Me, a non-profit organization focused on young women's self-empowerment, leadership, and civic engagement on the Westside of Stanislaus County.

Erica was recently selected to serve on the Board of Directors for Communities for a New California Education Fund. In 2017, she was recognized as one of the region's Top 20 under 40 by The Modesto Bee. That year, she also served as a Fellow for the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Northern California to represent Stanislaus County. In this capacity, she advocated and provided trainings to immigrant families on their rights. In 2015, Erica was honored to be appointed to the California Organized Investment Advisory Board from the California State Senate. She was humbled to be selected as an exemplar Latina Leader for the statewide program Hispanas Organized for Political Equality in 2014, an institute dedicated to training in leadership and advocacy skills, enabling Latinas to create fundamental change within their local neighborhoods and across California.

In her spare time, Erica enjoys traveling, volunteering for youth programs in her community, and advocating for gender equity rights.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erica Ayala", is positioned above the title.

State Senator, 12th District

California State Senate

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SENATOR
JERRY HILL

THIRTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Woman of the Year 2018 Stephanie Martinson

Stephanie Martinson is the founder and President of Racing Hearts Foundation, a Palo Alto-based, all-volunteer nonprofit organization that advocates for the installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in every school, gym and public space.

Sudden cardiac arrests (SCA) are the third-leading cause of death in the United States; affecting approximately 356,000 people where 9 out of 10 victims die. Different from a heart attack, SCA is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart unexpectedly stops beating. It can affect seemingly healthy people of all ages, even children and teens. Without intervention, the survival rate of an SCA is 5%. The use of an AED changes everything; increasing a victim's chances up to 80%. That is why the Racing Hearts Foundation exists. Its goal is to make AEDs as common and widely available as a regular first aid kit.

Stephanie's drive comes from personal experience. While climbing up Yosemite's Half Dome, Stephanie survived her own sudden cardiac arrest. After this incident, she was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (also known as "an enlarged heart") at age 23. Since then, she's been motivated to give back to the community and empower everyone with the knowledge and tools to help people who experience cardiac arrests like she did.

Stephanie is committed to her community in so many different ways. She is the project director of Santa Clara County's AED program which deploys AEDs to high risk communities. She's teamed up with Stanford Health Care to produce the Racing Hearts 5K and 10K races. Her day job is as a speech pathologist at the Palo Alto Veteran Affairs Hospital, contributing to research on traumatic brain injuries. She was a member of Leadership Palo Alto Fellows Class of 2014 and was appointed to the Santa Clara County National Guard and Veterans Affairs Commission.

Stephanie represents the best that the 13th Senate District has to offer. She is someone who has taken her own personal adversity in life and turned it into something positive that will save countless lives across the state. I am proud to name Stephanie Martinson as this year's Woman of the Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Hill", is written over a faint, circular watermark of the California State Capitol building.

Jerry Hill
Senator, 13th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
ANDY VIDAK

FOURTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES

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EDUCATION

ENERGY, UTILITIES
AND COMMUNICATIONS

GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION

NATURAL RESOURCES
AND WATER

Woman of the Year 2018 Robin Brassfield-Cooper

Robin Brassfield-Cooper of Bakersfield is the owner and operator of Robin's EnviroVac, a company that provides a wide range of environmental remediation and industrial maintenance services to companies and government agencies throughout California. Her company is a local, certified Woman-Owned Small Business serving oil & gas, agriculture, energy utility, construction, and industrial companies.

A veteran of the oil industry for over 45 years, Robin was born and grew up in Bakersfield. After graduating from East Bakersfield High School, Robin worked for a variety of employers including Giumarra Farms, Fosters Freeze, KC Steakhouse, and Coastal Engineering. While at Coastal Engineering, Robin spent 13 years sewing netting to cover oil sumps. She then transitioned into a job selling parts for pumping units and other oil industry products in addition to serving as a public relations representative for the company.

Robin's experience at Coastal Engineering helped her develop a goal to start her own business. She earned her Women Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification through the United States Small Business Administration. Robin earned her contractor's license in 2000 while also networking, performing her own public relations, and driving her own vacuum truck.

In addition to establishing and growing her own business, Robin has also sought out opportunities to give back to the Bakersfield and Kern County communities.

Robin founded the Kern County Oil Contractors Association (K-COCA), an organization that is dedicated to providing educational incentives, opportunities, and assistance to Kern County high school students who have demonstrated an interest in pursuing higher academic learning after completing high school, and for those who have an interest in, or a connection to, the oil & gas, agriculture, construction, utility and energy industries.

Robin's background, business success, and dedication to the Kern County community make her a role model to young girls and women in the Central Valley and across California.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Vidak".

ANDY VIDAK
Senator, 14th District



California State Senate

SENATOR
JIM BEALL

FIFTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT

Woman of the Year 2018

Sharon Hare

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Reverend Sharon Hare grew up in Concord, California, as the youngest daughter of two immigrant parents from Belfast, Northern Ireland.

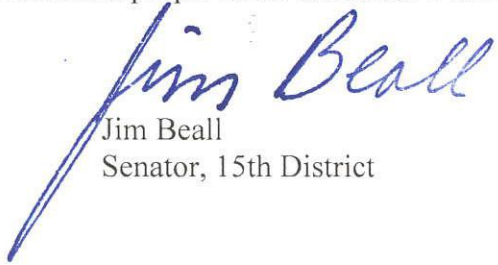
Sharon had an early introduction to justice and mercy issues through her home church, First Presbyterian, in Concord, California. The church taught her how to think for herself and to understand through hands-on experience. Through her church youth group involvement, she worked with Caesar Chavez and the Migrant Workers in the 1960's on the Sunset Strip in L.A. and also in Watts, California after the race riots. In college, she worked at a retreat center in Guatemala and had the privilege of teaching Vacation Bible School on a Navaho Indian Reservation.

Sharon attended Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington and earned a B.A in Sociology and Education. Following graduation, she worked for the Salvation Army where she did case management and counseling for young pregnant girls. In Oakland, she helped open a half-way house for young pregnant sex workers. It was this experience that led her into ministry because she felt that churches should welcome all people.

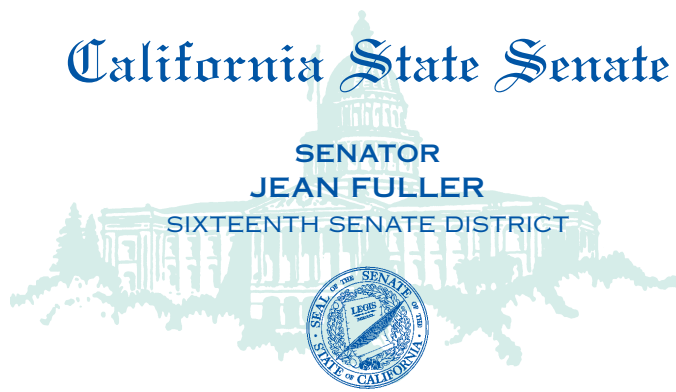
Sharon attended McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois where she received a Masters of Divinity and was ordained in 1984. During seminary, she was the Founding Director of Grainger Hall, a residential community for at-risk women that offered education opportunities, employment, counseling, and a safe, supportive environment. At Grainger Hall, Sharon met and adopted her daughter, Michele. After graduation, Sharon stayed true to her calling—to help churches be open to all people—and she did just that in churches in Illinois, Washington and New York.

Reverend Hare returned home upon discovery of her mother suffering from a severe stroke and her father's dementia diagnosis. It was then when she established the First Presbyterian Church of San Jose. Under her leadership, the church started the Bag Lunch Program, which feeds the homeless and *Lifted Spirits*, a drop-in center for at-risk women. *Lifted Spirits* partners with non-profits and volunteers to provide hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, clothing, personal supplies, free medical care and other programs that provide support and assistance to those who are at-risk. The program has even been able to put women in touch with a program that gets non-violent crimes expunged from their records.

Pastor Sharon, as she is commonly referred, states that she has experienced the joys of life through the ability to give to others. It is indeed an honor to her when homeless people on the streets know her by name and look to the First Presbyterian Church for help.


Jim Beall
Senator, 15th District

California State Senate



Woman of the Year 2018 Lili Marsh

Lili Marsh is a patriot. Her selfless, compassionate and heartwarming actions embody the American Spirit and have brought comfort to thousands of her neighbors, our first-responders and our soldiers.

Before moving to Bakersfield in 1981, Lili lived in East Hampton, New York. She had a successful career in event production and club management.

As a former New Yorker, she felt a very close connection to events on 9-11, and as an American she knew she needed to give assistance to the victims of that tragic day.

Lili acted quickly and decisively. In less than a week, she organized an all-day fundraising festival featuring local bands, speakers, church choirs, and individual artists. The Bakersfield Unites for the Stars and Stripes event was an immense success, not only raising \$75,000 in one day, but also bringing together 20,000 Kern County residents to share their grief and provide support for each other. The event continued for three consecutive years, raising funds for families of service members deployed in the Middle East. For her efforts, Lili received the Chairman's Award at the Beautiful Bakersfield Awards.

But, Lili was not done assisting people in need. Following Hurricane Katrina, she recruited volunteers from the Bakersfield Fire Department, and organized an effort to fill 2 semi-trucks with supplies for the evacuees impacted by the storm. While other supplies were delayed and sitting on highways, Lily's Bakersfield determination and New York attitude ensured that the supplies from Bakersfield reached those who needed them immediately and in fact were some of the first supplies to reach Texas Stadium.

More recently, Lili organized a relief effort for the flood victims of Houston. In only 48 hours, she planned a campaign that filled 3 semi-trucks full of essential supplies that would be headed toward small towns, largely forgotten by the larger government relief effort.

In addition to her ability to organize and deliver relief supplies, Lili's father, a WWII veteran, became her inspiration to ensure that all local WWII veterans were able to see the memorials in Washington DC that were built in their honor. In 2012, that inspiration led her to found Kern County Honor Flight, and in May of 2012, 21 WWII veterans and volunteer guardians made the first unforgettable trip with this fantastic organization.

Since that time, thanks largely to her efforts and the efforts of thousands of volunteers and benefactors, there have been 31 flights and over 1,300 veterans have had the opportunity to see their memorials built to honor their sacrifice, their service, and their patriotism.

In 2016, Lili began a new project called Portrait of a Warrior. After seeing a similar project in Texas, she found a local artist and began working with a property manager to find the perfect location for the Portrait of a Warrior Gallery. This incredible gallery will feature the portraits of service members that lost their lives from injuries suffered on the battlefield following the 9-11 attacks.

As of November 2017, the project has found its home and is perfectly located at 20th and Eye in Bakersfield, and will open soon to remind us all of the sacrifices made by our soldiers to defend our lives and ensure our freedom.

Lili has inspired and motivated thousands of people to follow their hearts, to give freely for worthy causes, and to help the less fortunate. She represents the best that is in all of us, and she inspires us to take on challenges that will bring relief to those who don't see any relief in sight. She represents the American Spirit that is still strong in Senate District 16. She is an American patriot and the 16th Senate District's Woman of the Year.


JEAN FULLER

Senator, 16th State Senate District

COMMITTEES
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE 3
ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
HEALTH
JUDICIARY
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER

WEB
SD17.SENATE.CA.GOV

California State Senate



WILLIAM W. MONNING
MAJORITY LEADER
SEVENTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT

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MONTEREY DISTRICT OFFICE
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MONTEREY, CA 93940
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SAN LUIS OBISPO DISTRICT OFFICE
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SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
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SANTA CRUZ DISTRICT OFFICE
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SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
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SANTA CLARA COUNTY
TELEPHONE NUMBER
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Woman of the Year 2018 Jennifer Adams

Jennifer Adams is the Executive Director of RISE (Respect, Inspire, Support, Empower), a nonprofit organization in San Luis Obispo County that serves both victims of intimate partner violence and sexual assault/abuse of their loved ones through providing comprehensive programs, services and resources to the community. RISE seeks to transform the lives of sexual and intimate partner violence survivors, their families and the community through services and education that promotes safety, healing and empowerment. As Executive Director, Ms. Adams oversees all programs and resources provided by RISE to the San Luis Obispo community.

Prior to her leadership at RISE, Ms. Adams had over fifteen years of experience in education and advocacy for sexual assault and intimate partner violence victims. Ms. Adams is incredibly passionate about her work and hopes to create a community free from inter-personal violence. She is a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo alumnus in both the undergrad and graduate programs, and lives on the Central Coast.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Monning", is written over a light blue circular stamp that contains the text "OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE SENATE".

WILLIAM W. MONNING
Senator, 17th District

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SENATOR.HERTZBERG@SENATE.CA.GOV

California State Senate

SENATOR
ROBERT M. HERTZBERG
EIGHTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT
REPRESENTING LOS ANGELES COUNTY



COMMITTEES
NATURAL RESOURCES
AND WATER
CHAIR
ELECTIONS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
ENERGY, UTILITIES
AND COMMUNICATIONS
GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE
JUDICIARY

Woman of the Year 2018 Diana M. Sanchez

For over 25 years, Diana Sanchez has worked in the marketing, public, and community relations field. For 19 years, she has been a part of Los Angeles World Airports. While at LAX, Ms. Sanchez served as a liaison to the City of Inglewood where she was elected Vice President of the Inglewood/Airport Area Chamber of Commerce for three terms.

Currently, she is the Public and Community Relations Director for Van Nuys Airport - one of the busiest general aviation airports in the world, - and is responsible for all facets of the airport's community, media, and public relations outreach. Since she started at VNY, Ms. Sanchez has expanded the airport's involvement in the community, forming it into one of the key organizations in the San Fernando Valley. She has also established valuable partnerships with local chambers, schools, and non-profits by taking a hands-on leadership role in these vital community groups and even more, she exceeds company expectations by donating her personal time and money to assure each organization's success.

Her community outreach extends beyond work. In her spare time, she also participates in clean ups and fundraisers for organizations such as the National Kidney Foundation. At the airports, she formed an employee/tenant volunteer group, started the airport's Aviation Careers Education program, grew Job Shadow Day and established an online newsletter. Each year she works with a committee to host 1,400 school students for a career fair introducing students to the world of aviation. She has also fostered partnerships with groups such as the Greater Van Nuys Rotary, Tierra Del Sol and New Horizons.

Under her leadership, the airport has received several community awards, including the Champion of Education Award (2011) and the Valley of the Stars Award (2013) from The Valley Economic Alliance (TVEA). The airport also received the Mid Valley YMCA (MVY) Flip Smith Pillar of the Community Award (2013), the 2012 Community Award of Excellence from the Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce (GSFVC) and was inducted into the Valley Industry and Commerce Association Hall of Fame (2016).

Ms. Sanchez is the recipient of the 2016 MVY Pillar of the Community Award, 2015 GSFVC Mendenhall Memorial Award, 2011 TVEA Champion of Education and is past president of the Encino Chamber of Commerce (ECC) and the GSFVC.

She currently serves as Secretary to the Valley Presbyterian Hospital Foundation Board, is a member of the Board of Governors for TVEA, board member for the Valley Family Center, ECC and Vice-Chair for the MVY.

Ms. Sanchez is a graduate of California State University, Long Beach where she served as student body president (1992). She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism with an emphasis in Public Relations and a Master's in Public Administration.

Robert M. Hertzberg
State Senator, 18th district

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California State Legislature

SENATOR
HANNAH-BETH JACKSON

NINETEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



CHAIR
SENATE JUDICIARY
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN,
WORK AND FAMILIES

COMMITTEES
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1
ON EDUCATION
LABOR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER
PUBLIC SAFETY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CALIFORNIA'S WINE INDUSTRY

Woman of the Year 2018 Helene Schneider

Helene Schneider currently serves as Regional Coordinator for the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, focusing on reducing homelessness in communities throughout California and Arizona, and as a Regional Development Director for Cal State University, Channel Islands. She was elected as Santa Barbara's 49th Mayor in 2009, serving two terms. She served in Santa Barbara for the past 14 years, winning her first election as City Councilmember in 2003, having been introduced to the world of municipal government in 2001 as a Commissioner to the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara. She ran for Congress in 2016.

As a public official, Mayor Schneider strived to connect local government with the business community, non-profits and philanthropic organizations. She paid particular attention to expanding reliable water supplies during the 6+-year exceptional drought, including a process that resulted in a 40% water conservation goal, upgrading its recycled water capabilities, and re-commissioning its 25-year old desalination plant. She also focused heavily on finding solutions to reduce homelessness throughout Santa Barbara County, and on Santa Barbara's artistic and cultural economy, where she spearheaded the "Art in the Mayor's Office" program in coordination with the Santa Barbara Arts Collaborative. She represented the City of Santa Barbara on a variety of regional boards that focus on transportation, air quality, solid waste, public education, youth violence prevention and homelessness. She served on the Statewide Board of the League of California Cities and as Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Task Force.

Helene Schneider's professional background is in human resources management. She worked as Director of Human Resources for her local Planned Parenthood affiliate and as a trainer and consultant with HRxpress, focusing most of her trainings on the California statewide mandated training on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. Her other volunteer experiences includes being President of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (1999-2000); President of the Santa Barbara Human Resources Association (2001); and as a Katherine Harvey Fellow (2004-2005). She received the 2017 Roses Award from the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee; 2017 Woman of Achievement Award from American Women in Communications, Santa Barbara; 2017 "Rivvie" Award from Visit Santa Barbara; 2016 Citizen of the Year Award from Downtown Santa Barbara; and the 2015 U.S. Conference of Mayors & Americans for the Arts National Award for Arts Leadership.

Schneider earned her BA degree from Skidmore College and her Professional Designation in Human Resources Management from UCSB Extension.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hannah-Beth Jackson".

HANNAH-BETH JACKSON
19th District

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FAX (909) 591-7096

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SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92401
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FAX (909) 591-7096

California State Senate

SENATOR
CONNIE M. LEYVA
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



CHAIR
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
MANUFACTURED HOME
COMMUNITIES

VICE CHAIR
WOMEN'S CAUCUS

MEMBER
RULES

EDUCATION

ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS

HEALTH

HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT &
RETIREMENT

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CALIFORNIA-MEXICO
COOPERATION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PORTS
& GOODS MOVEMENT

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
WOMEN & INEQUALITY:
STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE
OPPORTUNITY

Woman of the Year 2018 Karen DiCarlo

As the Executive Director of Santa Claus, Inc., Karen takes her job of running one of Southern California's largest and oldest nonprofit charities serving impoverished youth very seriously. She knows that she is "exactly where God wants her to be." Helping children who are living in extreme poverty is her passion. She began volunteering at Santa Claus, Inc. in 1986. She served four years as the Fundraising Chairman, nine years as the organization's President and was hired as the organization's first employee and first Executive Director in 2012.

Under her leadership, the 66 year old organization has grown more than 500 percent over the past five years from serving 18,000 children at Christmas 2012 to now serving over 105,000 children throughout the year. Karen has led the organization to develop five thriving programs to further reach into local communities to serve children 365 days a year through its Youth Enrichment Services (YES!) programs. Times change and so have the needs of youth as the population of the Inland Empire region has exploded with low income families who are looking for jobs and cheaper housing. Way too many children are being held hostage in dire poverty in Inland Empire communities.

Karen has orchestrated lucrative partnerships between Santa Claus, Inc. and FedEx, Bank of America, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Best Choice Products, Amazon, Walmart, Target, Toyota, BNSF Railroad, Union Pacific Railroad, Stater Bros. Charities, Ross, Chino Valley Ranchers, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the San Bernardino Police Department, Toys R Us, Wells Fargo, and other major partners. As a result of her efforts, over two million dollars in in-kind donations of clothing, toys, infant items, school supplies, personal hygiene products, and other items are received each year. Santa Claus, Inc.'s Youth Enrichment Services programs YES! now serves over 105,000 of the Inland Empire's most impoverished children in ten school districts while providing product to over 35 other nonprofits and city and county agencies.

Managing the operations of the organization and hundreds of dedicated volunteers who help the organization deliver services is the part of Karen's job that she truly enjoys. Making it all work is a labor of love.

With the strategic vision set forth by the organization's board of directors to increase outreach to a minimum of 225,000 children by the year 2022, it doesn't look like Karen will be retiring from Santa Claus in the near future!

Karen and Santa Claus, Inc. are no strangers to awards. Santa Claus, Inc., named a Great Nonprofits Top Nonprofit for the past four years, was named the Nonprofit of the Year in 2016 and was honored as the 2017 Inland Empire Nonprofit of the Year by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership. Karen is the most proud of receiving the Sun Newspaper's Outstanding Citizen Award given to four individuals at the Sun's 100th anniversary celebration, the Social Entrepreneur of the Year at Cal State San Bernardino's Spirit of the Entrepreneur Awards, and the Hero of the Heartland Award from Stater Bros. Charities.

Karen is married to Don and they will celebrate their 50th anniversary in August. They have three children and 10 grandchildren.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Connie M. Leyva".

CONNIE M. LEYVA
State Senator, 20th District



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VICTORVILLE, CA 92392
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FAX (760) 843-8348

SANTA CLARITA DISTRICT OFFICE
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FAX (661) 286-2543

California State Senate

**SENATOR
SCOTT WILK**
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
EDUCATION
VICE CHAIR
AGRICULTURE
VICE CHAIR
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4

Woman of the Year 2018 Marlee Means Lauffer

Marlee Lauffer became President of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital Foundation in September 2015, as well as being appointed as the hospital's Vice President, Marketing and Communications. At the Foundation, she oversees its extensive awareness and fundraising programs, including its current \$25 million dollar Capital Campaign for a New Patient Tower. Her hospital responsibilities include external branding and marketing programs, internal communications, community outreach and education, and volunteer services. Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital is a 238-bed not-for-profit acute care hospital serving the Santa Clarita Valley since 1975. Henry Mayo is an Advanced Primary Stroke Center and a Heart Attack Receiving Center (STEMI). The hospital features state-of-the-art Inpatient facilities, a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Catheterization Lab, Infusion Center, Breast Center and an Outpatient Surgery Center.

Previously, Marlee was Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Newhall Land, the developer of Valencia and the future Newhall Ranch. Marlee joined Newhall Land in 1989 with initial responsibility for public and media relations, and later, investor relations and master marketing. She earned a reputation as an innovative leader, effective communicator and strong community partner with recognition and honors from many local organizations and regional publications.

Marlee, a graduate of UCLA, is deeply involved with the local business, civic and nonprofit community. Prior to her current position, she had volunteered extensively at the hospital, serving on its Foundation Board and Board of Directors. Marlee was appointed to the City of Santa Clarita's initial Arts Commission and has served on various arts advisory boards. She supports many other area organizations in leadership positions, including the SCV Chamber of Commerce where she previously served as Chair, Zonta, WiSH Education Foundation, and SCVEDC. In 2004, Marlee joined with several local business leaders to form the Bank of Santa Clarita and remains a Director on its Board.

A proud mother to 19 year old Katharine, Marlee makes her home in Valencia.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Scott Wilk".

Senator Scott Wilk
Senate District 21

California State Senate

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SENATOR
ED HERNANDEZ, O.D.
TWENTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

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Woman of the Year 2018

Norma Edith García

Norma Edith García, a proud daughter of hard-working immigrants, was the first one in her family to attend college. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles. Throughout college, Ms. García worked as a part-time recreation leader in one of the most vulnerable communities in the San Gabriel Valley. She experienced first-hand that parks provide a safety net for children and families, helping to cultivate youth development, improve public health and build a sense of community. These profound experiences served as the foundation for a life-long commitment, determination and passion for public service.

Ms. García was appointed as Chief Deputy Director of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation in September 2016, making her the first woman to serve in that capacity in the Department since it was created in 1944. Before her recent appointment, she held the position of Deputy Director of the Department's Planning and Development Agency.

An ardent believer in lifting up children and families, and strengthening communities throughout LA County, Ms. García works tirelessly through her active participation in many civic and professional organizations. She currently serves on the Board of New Economics for Women, an affordable housing and social enriched services provider for women-led families. She also serves on the Governing Board of Trustees for Rio Hondo College. Under her leadership the college led the region in providing one-year free tuition. Additionally, she co-founded and serves on the Board of the El Monte Promise Foundation, which is a collective-impact backbone organization that unites the community's efforts to create a seamless cradle-to-college pathway in the greater El Monte/South El Monte region.

Ms. García was invited to the White House by President Barack Obama in 2015 where her work was highlighted by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. In 2016, Ms. García was invited to participate and share the stage with former President Bill Clinton at the Clinton Global Initiative America. In 2017, Ms. García received the Los Angeles County, First District Women of the Year by the Los Angeles County Commission of Women and Supervisor Hilda Solis. She is a graduate from the Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Leadership Institute and was awarded a Conflict Resolution Fellowship through the U.S. State Department in Indonesia.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Hernandez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Ed Hernandez, O.D.
California State Senator
22nd Senate District

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California State Senate

MIKE MORRELL

SENATOR, TWENTY-THIRD DISTRICT



COMMITTEES

ENERGY, UTILITIES
AND COMMUNICATIONS
VICE CHAIR

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
AND RETIREMENT
VICE CHAIR

INSURANCE, BANKING AND
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

TRANSPORTATION
AND HOUSING

Woman of the Year Shelley Burnach

San Bernardino resident Shelley Burnach is a dedicated volunteer whose enthusiasm for serving others never wanes. She is always willing to give her time and resources to causes throughout the region, with eyes toward making sure Inland Empire cities are ones of which to be proud.

Shelley has taken on leadership roles in a variety of local organizations. Among the many, she currently serves as Vice President of the Colton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, as a member of the Board of Friends of Santa Claus Inc. (and in recent years, Chairman of the organization's annual Christmas Tree Lane Gala), as a member of the St. Bernardine Medical Center Foundation Board of Trustees, and as a member of the The Unforgettables Board. She is also a founding Board Member of Women of Dignity Health as well as an active member of the Businesswomen's Association of San Bernardino County.

One of her favorite outreach events is coordinating with UCLA to donate hundreds of tickets to football games so that young athletes can attend. She says the joy that comes with their attendance is priceless. Her hope is that through this experience they will be further inspired to do well in school and aim to go to college.

Shelley studied at San Diego State University and Cal State San Bernardino, earning her degree in communications. Professionally, she has worked in the medical industry for over 20 years and at present is an Account Executive for PMT Ambulance and Premier Medical Transportation.

Shelley and her husband Dave have been married for 29 years and have two adult children, Heather and Calvin. The love their family shares for the city and the surrounding region is evident through their volunteer efforts to care for and instill civic pride in their community.

Shelley's guiding approach to life: "I believe in never giving up, finish what you start no matter the outcome because the road to success is trying."

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Morrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Mike" and "Morrell" being capitalized and prominent.

MIKE MORRELL
Senator, 23rd District



SENATOR KEVIN DE LEÓN

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Woman of the Year Cristina Ramirez Vazquez

Cristina Ramirez Vazquez has served as International Vice President for Workers United, Vice President of the California Labor Federation, Vice President of Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, was appointed by Governor Gray Davis to the California Citizens Compensation Committee, has served as board member of UCLA Labor Center and Sweatshop Watch.

An immigrant from Ecuador, Cristina came to the United States in 1971 with her mother and one of her sisters. She and her mother immediately joined her older sister and gained employment at a garment factory where she saw firsthand all the injustice and exploitation workers endure. She made a commitment to change the industry and fight for a better future for garment workers. This led to Cristina being hired as a union organizer.

Cristina has dedicated over 40 years to changing the labor movement and empowering workers across her region. She began working as an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1976. Throughout her career, Cristina has represented thousands of Garment Workers, Industrial Laundry Workers, Warehouse and Distribution Workers in California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico.

The Laundry Workers Union merged with the Western States Regional Joint Board and this merger afforded Cristina the opportunity to represent more than 4,000 industrial laundry workers. Immediately after the merger, the first labor strike happened in this industry changing the dynamic and strategy of the union. The workers won that strike and they continue to fight to achieve the best contracts for industrial laundry workers.

In 1979, Cristina married her late husband Attorney Mario Vazquez and together they fought for immigration, equal rights for all workers, and peace around the world. She lives in Los Angeles with her son Adrian Vazquez and daughter Gabriela Vazquez who as a labor family, continue to work for the betterment of the working class.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin de León".

KEVIN DE LEÓN
President pro Tempore
Twenty-Fourth Senate District

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 651-4025

California State Senate

SENATOR
ANTHONY J. PORTANTINO
TWENTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



2018 Woman of the Year Yasmin Beers

Yasmin Beers is the newly appointed City Manager for the City of Glendale. She is the first woman to hold this position for the City. Previously she was the Assistant City Manager serving as the Chief Operating Officer overseeing 1,600 employees serving in Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks, Library Arts and Culture including the Glendale Water and Power utility department. She was also responsible for City-wide budget oversight, employee relations, the Capital Improvement Program, and policy management.

Yasmin attended and graduated from Hoover High School in Glendale. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the California State University, Northridge; and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership from Woodbury University.

Yasmin began her career with the City of Glendale in 1987 as a part-time employee in the Glendale Public Library while attending high school and continued through her college years. Since that time she has held different positions in city management. She was appointed Deputy City Manager in 2000 and Assistant City Manager in 2010. In November of 2017, Yasmin was appointed Interim City Manager; this was her second time serving in this capacity. She was appointed to the position of City Manager on February 20, 2018.

Yasmin is a past member of Soroptimist International of Glendale. She served as President in 1999/2000. She is also a past board member of the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. In 2011, the Glendale Chamber of Commerce recognized Yasmin as Woman of the Year; and in 2013, she was the recipient of The Armenian American Woman of Excellence Award; a tribute to her core values that represents her civic responsibilities, volunteerism, and community service.

Yasmin and her husband Dan live in Glendale with their two children.

I am proud to have Jasmin Beers represent the 25th Senate District as its Woman of the Year in the 2018 State Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony J. Portantino".

Anthony J. Portantino
Senator, 25th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
BEN ALLEN

TWENTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
EDUCATION, CHAIR
ELECTIONS & CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER
TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING
JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS, CHAIR

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
DEFENSE & AEROSPACE, VICE CHAIR

ENVIRONMENTAL CAUCUS, CO-CHAIR
JEWISH CAUCUS, VICE CHAIR



Woman of the Year 2018 Rashida Leah Jones

Rashida Jones is an acclaimed writer, director, actress, producer, activist and philanthropist. She currently produces, directs, and stars in the critically acclaimed comedy, "Angie Tribeca," on TBS, which will return for a fourth season. In addition, Jones is writing and directing "Goldie Vance," based on the comic book, for Fox. Additional film credits include "The Muppets," "The Big Year," "The Social Network," and "I Love You, Man." Television credits include "Parks and Recreation," "The Office," "Boston Public," "Wanted," "Unhitched," "Freaks and Geeks," "The Chappelle Show" and "NY-LON." Her writing credits include Pixar's "Toy Story 4" and "Black Mirror."

In addition to her many accomplishments in the arts, Ms. Jones uses her platform to bring light to the struggles of women and girls around the world. Her 2015 Emmy-nominated film "Hot Girls Wanted" explores society's relationship with sex and technology and its effect on young women. The documentary has been expanded to a docu-series that can now be viewed on Netflix.

Most recently, Ms. Jones became a founding member of the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, which works to address the systematic inequities in the workplace through political and legal advocacy. She is also an advocate for the International Rescue Committee, helping to shed light on the world's worst humanitarian crises, including the experience of Syrian refugees. She sits on the board of Peace First and works with additional charities Stand Up to Cancer, Saint Jude's Children's Research Hospital and Housing Works.

The daughter of Quincy Jones and Peggy Lipton, Rashida Jones grew up in the 26th Senate District and graduated from Harvard University.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Allen".

BEN ALLEN
Senator, 26th District



California State Senate

SENATOR
HENRY STERN

TWENTY-SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



Woman of the Year 2018 Betsy Connolly

Betsy Connolly is a mother, educator, trained veterinarian, and a voice for decency, diversity and excellence on the Conejo Valley School District Board. For the last decade, she has been fighting tirelessly to protect the quality of our local K-12 education and, more recently, the openness and integrity of the school system itself, as a place welcome to bold ideas and tolerance for diverse perspectives among parents, students and teachers.

Betsy was born and raised on the East Coast before heading to Colorado to earn her Bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Denver and her doctorate of veterinary medicine from Colorado State University. She spent 18 years in private practice as a veterinarian before teaching at Pierce and Moorpark Colleges, and running for school board in 2008.

Her time on the school board started out with a focus on data-driven decision making and results-based policies. A big believer in goal-setting and measuring outcomes, Betsy exercised a keen eye for effective programs and an ability to connect leaders with just the right nudge to put things in motion. Among her accomplishments, the BreakThrough Student Assistance Program launched under her watchful eye to provide targeted assessment and intervention for students struggling at school because of social and emotional challenges.

Since 2016, Betsy's role has been forced to shift to a fierce opponent of new school district policies to limit child exposure to "controversial" literature in the name of "parent choice." She has also emerged as voice for tolerance, pushing back against a local rise in anti-Semitism and anti-LGBTQ activity, as well as for Dreamers in Conejo Valley schools whose families face constant threats from a dizzying shift in national immigration policy.

Her grit and courage in defending against all bullies, large and small, have made her an indispensable conduit for parents, teachers and students. Among the leaders Betsy has unlocked, the newest crop of student leaders, whose passions have been burnished in the intensity of the current national political dialogue, are emerging as a formidable force.

Local leadership matters. Betsy is why.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Stern", with a stylized flourish at the end.

HENRY STERN
State Senator, 27th District

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California State Senate

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JEFF STONE, PHARM.D.
TWENTY-EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT



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& WATER

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BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
PUBLIC SAFETY

Woman of the Year 2018 Tammy Wilson

Tammy Wilson is the heart of Oak Grove Center. She is an extremely hands-on CEO and is invested in every aspect of daily operations. Tammy has invested a great amount of energy into the facility's fundraising efforts, as well as applied for grants in order to expand services for the at-risk and special needs youth that Oak Grove serves. Her efforts have enabled the facility to build a gymnasium, enhance the educational curriculum with state-of-the-art technology with an emphasis on science, and incorporate several mediums of art into the programming. The inclusion of arts has proven to be an invaluable tool in the therapeutic process. Children that have difficulty with expression have found that this alternative offers them a non-traditional means of telling their story and initiating healing in a safe and supportive environment.

Being personally invested in each child's success is what really makes Tammy stand out. She takes the time to get to know each child and acknowledges them by name when walking on campus. If a child is struggling, she will assist staff with developing special incentives to help them become successful. If Oak Grove youth are participating in an event, Tammy is in attendance and their biggest cheerleader.

One of the recent projects that Tammy has championed was aiding Oak Grove youth to raise funds supporting "The Peanut Butter Project" to supply protein to children in Third World Countries and building wells in Africa for fresh drinking water.

Serving on the Board of the Murrieta Chamber of Commerce, participating as a mentor in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) for the past several years, serving on the Loma Linda University Medical Center-Murrieta Community Partnership Council, and serving as a member of the Temecula Rotary Club are just a few of the other ways that Tammy gives back to her community.

Tammy is a tremendous role model who leads by example, thereby making the overall success of the program, and each area and department feel supported, and operating at their maximum efficiency. Tammy has recently catapulted Oak Grove Center into becoming one of only a few programs to be licensed as a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program.

Oak Grove Center would not be the outstanding facility it is today without Tammy Wilson. It is her vision and drive that pushes everyone to not be complacent with what we have accomplished and to always strive for ways to improve the services provided to our youth. Under Tammy's leadership, the staff works every day to "*Empower Success and Transform Lives.*"

A handwritten signature of Jeff Stone in black ink.

JEFF STONE
State Senator, 28th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
JOSH NEWMAN

TWENTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



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BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HEALTH
HUMAN SERVICES
INSURANCE

Woman of the Year 2018 Catherine Ward

Catherine Ward currently serves as Interim Director of California State University Fullerton's Veterans Resource Center, a *Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success* since its inception in 2010. As the CSUF VRC's Interim Director, Catherine provides leadership and oversight in the development and implementation of strengths-based programs and services that support the achievement of student veterans' academic, personal, and professional success. Catherine has served the Cal State Fullerton student veteran population since 2009, with a focus on improving the student veteran experience; promoting strengths and resiliency; and advocating on behalf of women veterans. Throughout her dedicated service in seeking innovative and effective ways to support student veterans, Catherine has always given full credit and maximum support to her staff, colleagues, and community members who have contributed to the accomplishments of the Veterans Resource Center. And yet, Catherine is always quick to point out, it is the student veterans themselves who so inspire her every day. Over the years, Catherine has had the privilege of collaborating with countless student veterans in their pursuit of their education and future goals. It is an honor and privilege, she says, for which she will always be grateful.

Catherine has presented at local, regional, and national conferences such as the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) on high-impact best practices for student veterans; creating an inclusive culture in veteran resource centers; and on best practices in serving and supporting women veterans. Over the past nine years, Catherine has also served on several community committees to establish support for veterans in higher education. She is also a part-time lecturer for Cal State Fullerton's College of Health and Human Development.

Catherine has received a Master of Science degree in Counseling and a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from Cal State Fullerton and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership, with an emphasis in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California. Her research interests include understanding how student affairs professionals can influence student success; equity and inclusion in higher education; and the role of empathy in the workforce.

SENATOR JOSH NEWMAN
Senate District 29

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Committee on Labor and
Industrial Relations
Joint Legislative Committee
Rules

Select Committee on Women
and Inequality (Founder)

Woman of the Year 2018 Negest (Nikki) Legesse

Negest (Nikki) Legesse was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After graduating from high school Nikki moved to Buffalo, New York, to attend college. Soon after completing her Bachelor degree from Canisius College, she decided to leave cold and snowy Buffalo for a sunnier and warmer place. Nikki moved to Los Angeles where she completed law school and discovered her deep passion for helping others realize their dreams. Ever since, she has helped countless people acquire small businesses and has offered her knowledge and experience to ensure their success.

In 2003 she founded the Ethiopian American Chamber of Commerce serving over 100 businesses, helped organize the Little Ethiopia Business Association and created the International Unity Parade. Nikki was the president and board member of Ethiopian American Youth Development, an organization dedicated to the development of Ethiopian Youth in Los Angeles as well as in Ethiopia. Nikki is the president of International Aid and Culture, a non-profit organization that promotes art and youth. She was committed to helping homeless youth in South Los Angeles where she provided housing to those in need. Nikki was the Co-Founder of Ethiopia Creates, a program that fosters and promotes Ethiopian artists and Ethiopian Art. Nikki continues her work as an ambassador of the Ethiopian Community promoting its culture, history and language and contributing to the Los Angeles Community at large. She is the executive director of Little Ethiopia Cultural and Resource Center where she provides services including but not limited to the Ethiopian community, particularly for adopted kids and their families. She is also the project leader of Ethiopian Development Center, a project of Community Partners, a non-profit organization. Nikki worked on the 2010 census and was awarded recognition of the work done. She was a board member of Pico Neighborhood Council for more than three years. She is currently serving as a City of Los Angeles commissioner, Commission for Community and family services. She is also president of Legesse Enterprises, Inc. a real estate investment company.

On behalf of State Senate District 30, I am delighted to honor Negest (Nikki) Legesse as my Woman of the Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'H. Mitchell'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

HOLLY J. MITCHELL
Senator, 30th District

California State Senate

SENATOR
RICHARD D. ROTH
THIRTY-FIRST DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Woman of the Year 2018 Kathy Michalak

I envision a world where everyone can have a decent, safe, affordable place to live.
Kathy Michalak

Kathy Michalak has been the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Riverside since April of 2014. Kathy first joined Habitat Riverside as a Board Member in 2009. Once the Board recognized her talents, she moved on to become the Resource Development Manager and eventually took on additional responsibility for developing the repair programs.

Realizing that Habitat Riverside had no licensed construction personnel, Kathy earned her Contractor's License and her EPA Renovators License, eventually becoming Habitat's Construction Manager, overseeing new construction, rehabilitation and vital home repair programs.

The home repair programs have been especially important to Habitat Riverside's ability to reach out and assist more than 90 families each year with home repairs ranging from exterior code violations to addressing health and safety issues for low-income homeowners, primarily seniors and the disabled.

Prior to joining Habitat Riverside, Kathy spent 35 years in various positions in the newspaper industry in Southern California working for The Los Angeles Times, The Press-Enterprise and the Inland Newspaper Group where she played a major role in the creation and launch of Riverside Magazine.

Kathy currently serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee for the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce, sits on the Grants Committee for The Community Foundation and is Chair of the Board of Friends of My Family. She was recently appointed as a Commissioner for Community Action Partnership of Riverside County and also serves on the boards of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce, the Hunter Park Business Council and MFI Recovery Center, Inc.

She is also an active member of Soroptomist International of Riverside and serves as the emcee for the annual Live Your Dream Conference which gives 7th and 8th grade girls the opportunity to meet and interact with successful women in various professions.

Congratulations Kathy on this well-deserved honor!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Roth".

RICHARD D. ROTH
Senator, 31st District

California State Senate



SENATOR RICARDO LARA

Woman of the Year 2018 **Senate 33rd District** **Nancy Lee**

Nancy Lee is a philanthropist, an International Facilitator for youth leadership development and the President of Dream Beyond Foundation. The foundation was founded in 2014 to support underserved Cambodian seniors in Long Beach, the city that is home to the largest number of Cambodians outside of Cambodia. The foundation provides meals, counseling, and extra-curricular programs for seniors, such as outings to museums, libraries, and aquariums. Through Nancy's leadership, the foundation also hosts an annual holiday dinner for over 300 seniors.

Nancy and her late husband, James Lee, have built three schools in three different provinces in Cambodia. Together, they are the founders of the Summit Foundation of Cambodia, which provides shelters for children from remote rural areas to attend a private school in the city of Phnom Penh. The foundation also provides scholarships to high school graduates and facilitates a youth leadership development program.

Nancy takes great pride assisting the Long Beach community's most vulnerable seniors and youth. Each year she provides over 60 scholarships to college-bound Long Beach students. She is an independent licensed facilitator for Path4Teens through Laurie Beth Jones and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens with Franklin Covey. Through these programs, Nancy has been able to teach and support hundreds of youth on how to reach their full potential by adopting good habits.

Nancy launched The Nancy Lee Show in 2014 on KhmerTV.com with the aim of promoting awareness, preserving the Khmer culture, and connecting the older and new generations. Her philosophy is of others over herself. In her own words, "I've never failed to offer a helping hand. I might be broke helping others, but I'm very rich in my heart. That's what success is all about."

Nancy Lee is an incredible leader and I am proud to represent her in the 33rd District.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ricardo Lara", with a stylized flourish at the end.

RICARDO LARA
Senator, 33rd District



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California State Senate

SENATOR
JANET NGUYEN
THIRTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

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HEALTH
VICE CHAIR
HUMAN SERVICES
VETERANS AFFAIRS

GOVERNOR'S MILITARY COUNCIL
STATE ALLOCATION BOARD



Woman of the Year 2018 Adela Montañez

Adela Montañez is a Community Advocate Coordinator for Latino Health Access (LHA) who has dedicated her life to improving the health and wellness of the residents of the Thirty-Fourth Senate District. She leads by example, empowers residents through education, and has been an agent of change in underserved communities.

Adela's lifelong path of community service began in her native Mexico where, as part of her studies, she completed a social work project in a small town in the State of Durango. There, Adela helped children in the impoverished town meet educational standards so that they could enroll in the local school. After completing her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Public Relations, education would continue to play an important role in Adela's life as she would go on to excel professionally at the National Institute of Adult Education. Herein, Adela helped set educational standards for public schools and assisted adults in completing their basic educational goals.

Upon her arrival to the United States, Adela found herself facing new economic and social hurdles. When her son became ill at the age of 5, Adela faced new challenges and a large hospital bill. It was only through her research that Adela learned of health care programs that were available to assist her and she began to see a need in the community for health information and education.

As fate would have it, Adela found Latino Health Access (LHA), a local nonprofit organization that would serve as a vehicle for her to share resources that she found for herself while caring for her son. LHA, an emerging nonprofit organization at the time, had also assisted her mother and Adela felt that it was a good match for her volunteer advocacy efforts. After seeing Adela's authentic connection with residents, LHA's director approached her to be one of the agency's first Promotoras (Promoters). At the time, Adela was working at the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) and the move required her to take a pay cut but understanding the value of LHA's mission to create a healthy, equitable, inclusive and prosperous community, Adela joined the organization in 1996.

While seeking to promote LHA's services in underserved communities, Adela faced unwillingness from residents to share information. To open the channels of communication, Adela devised creative programs including a cross-stitch class that provided women with a safe environment to talk about important issues like access to healthcare, HIV and domestic violence. Once engaged, Adela was able to build bonds with the women and encouraged the group to continue learning about other important topics like citizenship, an issue that she is very passionate about. Adela's ability to relate her personal story on this subject helped inspire many of her colleagues and community members to see the value of becoming a naturalized citizen, a program that Adela continues to promote to this day.

As the needs of underserved communities have evolved through the decades, Adela's role at LHA has also evolved from Community Health Worker, Program Coordinator and Health Education Program Coordinator to her current role as a Community Advocate Coordinator. What has not changed through the passage of time has been Adela's genuine desire to make the community a better, healthier place. Among the many initiatives that she has spearheaded, Adela takes pride in leading programs that inform and educate the community. Of the many initiatives that she's participated in, Adela is especially fond of The Wellness Corridor, a project that promotes healthy and active lifestyle choices for the residents of Santa Ana through the use of non-traditional open space. Adela is also an active member of various community task forces that seek to build safer neighborhoods by combating gang activity through leadership development, health education and community involvement.

A proud mother and grandmother, Adela believes that change comes about through hard work and finds joy in empowering residents. Through her work, Adela Montañez has touched countless lives in the Thirty Fourth Senate District and is worthy of this year's Woman of the Year award.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Nguyen".

JANET NGUYEN
Senator, 34th District

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ORGANIZATION
PUBLIC SAFETY



Woman of the Year 2018 Lorraine Grey

Lorraine Grey was born and raised in the Watts-Willowbrook community. Ms. Grey describes herself as a deeply spiritual person who is "stoic in adversity" as a result of understanding the community of which she hails from. Ms. Grey is the mother of one son, Dr. Sterling Roaf Jr. Raising her son as a single mother and going through the task of preparing him for college and supporting his decision to become a doctor left her with a desire to share her experiences and do something for the children of the community. Ms. Grey began her career at Charles R. Drew University working with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) in 1990. In January 2000, Ms. Grey started the Saturday Science Academy (SSA II) with seventy-five students. Now, due to her efforts, the program has increased its enrollment to over 245 students. She has expanded the program to include Tutoring, SAT Prep, and Critical Thinking Classes. One of the major components which lends to the success of the SSA II program is parental involvement, with 90% parental participation and a strong Dad's Club.

In addition to directing the SSA II program, Ms. Grey has taught nursing occupation courses at night school for young adults at Paramount High School, in Paramount, CA. Ms. Grey started the "School to Career" Program with students from Lynwood High School at Charles R. Drew University, and eventually expanded the program to include students from other surrounding high schools in the community. This gave students interested in medicine exposure to different disciplines. Ms. Grey also oversaw the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Programs, Verbum Dei High Schools Corporate Work Study Program, Archdiocese Youth Program, Nickerson Summer Youth, and Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) Youth Program. From this collaboration, Ms. Grey has secured employment for over 60 students from the community each summer since 2000.

Charles Drew University's pipeline program continues with, "The Annual Association of Minority Health Professions Schools on Career Opportunities in Biomedical Sciences and Health Professions." A delegation of sixty-six students attends this annual symposium in New Orleans, Louisiana, accompanied by Ms. Grey. Students from King Drew Medical Magnet High School and Paramount High School submitted research presentations and were awarded \$2,000 for their accomplishments.

Under Ms. Grey's leadership, over 90% of SSAIL students pursue higher education with an emphasis in medical careers; A fact that is a testament to her conviction and vision.

Retired on January 31, 2018, Ms. Grey plans to move to Atlanta, Georgia, where her son lives and plans to volunteer at the Cancer Care Center of America, and work with children. We wish her the best and thank her for her tireless dedication to her community and SD 35.

Steven C. Bradford
Senator, 35th District

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California State Senate

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PATRICIA C. BATES
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER
THIRTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
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JOINT RULES COMMITTEE

JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
COMMITTEE

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Woman of the Year 2018

DONNA KALEZ

Donna Kalez is the daughter of Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching founder, Don Hansen and was born and raised in San Clemente, California. Having been reared around the business her Dad built, Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching is simply in her blood. Dana Wharf has been a leader having based success on global responsible sportfishing and pioneering whale watching back in 1961, and opening the Dana Wharf location in 1971. Her responsibilities include managing the daily operations of all business segments (whale watching, charters, sportfishing, specialty cruises), marketing/advertising/promotions, staffing, inventory, retail, community and business relationships and more. In 2015 Donna and her family started a second location in Oceanside California called Oceanside Adventures a year round Whale Watching company.

Donna has a passion for getting children on the water; she and Dana Wharf host multiple events like FREE Halloween Kids Boo Cruises, FREE Santa Boat Rides, FREE Fishing trips and Fishing Clinics, FREE Whale Watching Trips, Festival of Whales, Art Lessons and the Annual Boat Parade of Lights. She develops partnerships to support many local non-profits benefiting military families, veterans, children, seniors, those with special-needs and more.

Donna has and currently holds many positions within the local business and industry communities including: past President of the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce, Chairman for the Festival of Whales, Board of Directors for the Sportfishing Association of California, CCA-CAL - Coastal Conservation Association, the Dana Point Harbor Association and the Doheny State Beach Inter Association, Advisor to the City of San Clemente Afterschool Fishing Partnership Program, 5th Marines Advisory Brigade, Sand Clemente Dons, Fish for Life and more. She is an active member of the following organizations: San Clemente Chamber of Commerce, Oceanside Visitors Bureau, Wyland Foundation, Dana Point Historical Society, National Charity League and more.

Donna has worked tirelessly for the business since 1992. After graduating San Clemente High School in 1989, she took classes at Saddleback to become a teacher. Her passion instead led her back to Dana Wharf where she is able to outreach to children and the community. Donna successfully runs the landing in the male-dominated world of sportfishing & whale watching. She wrote the book, The Adventures of Captain Don, featuring and in tribute to her father. In 2015, she co-produced a documentary "Sharing the Shores of Dana Point" DVD.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia C. Bates".

PATRICIA BATES
Senate Republican Leader
Senator, 36th District

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California State Senate



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VICE CHAIR
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GOVERNANCE & FINANCE
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND
RETIREMENT

Woman of the Year 2018

Ruth Tang Ding

During her illustrious career, both as a music teacher and a philanthropist, Ruth Ding has inspired students and members of her community with her organizational expertise and unflagging optimism in all her endeavors. She credits the strong work ethic and vision that her family instilled in her throughout her upbringing for her positive outlook on life, which served as a constant reminder to never take for granted the opportunities that she was afforded.

Ms. Ding received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Arizona State University. Her graduate work was performed at the University of Southern California. She has been an activist and promoter of the arts and Chinese culture in Orange County for over 50 years. She was honored in an article by Jodi Cadenhead of *Newport 17 Magazine* that celebrated "Champions of the Arts." She has produced and chaired many ethnic festivals, music, and cultural programs in Southern California.

In addition to her commitments to the arts, Ms. Ding is extremely active in a number of philanthropic community interests. She is the founding president of the Orange County Chinese Cultural Club and Pan Pacific Performing Arts, Inc. She served on the founding board of the Opera Pacific and Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center in Santa Ana, and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa. She was also the 2011 Gala Chair for Founder Plus, a support group consisting of founders of the center. These initiatives support education and community programs. Ms. Ding believes deeply in not only supporting the arts but also in instilling pride in younger members of the Chinese American community.

Ms. Ding was also instrumental in founding several major benefit events including the Opera Pacific Opera Ball, the Asian Headdress Ball, The International Music and Dance Festival, the Winter Blossom Ball and AASCSC's "Winter Gala" which raised \$200,000 for vital programs hosted by the Senior Service Center.

Ms. Ding has been honored with numerous leadership, music and service awards in her illustrious career. She has received the "Special Commendation for Service to Orange County Award," presented by the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and she was also made an "Honorary Goodwill Ambassador" by former Secretary of State of California, March Fong Eu in 1990. She is also listed in the "International Who's Who of Women", *The Dictionary of International Biography*, and now the California State Senate Woman of the Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Moorlach", is positioned above the printed name.

John M. W. Moorlach
Senator, 37th District



Woman of the Year 2018 Paula Jansen

Paula is a humble California native who comes from a long line of military veterans spanning all services including her father, uncles, brothers, sister, nieces and nephews. After 21 years of service Paula retired from the U.S. Navy as a Chief. She has been married to Eric Jansen, also retired from the U.S. Navy, for 25 years and they have two children. Paula has dedicated thousands of hours supporting the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Council for Youth Empowerment across San Diego County. Paula is a member of both the Woman's Club of Lakeside and the El Capitan Stadium Association. In 2016 and 2017 Paula was awarded the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for her tireless volunteer efforts.

Most notably, in 2017, she achieved a milestone for women veterans, Paula became the first female Post Commander of VFW Post 5867 in Lakeside. The 71-year-old Post has an illustrious history in Lakeside as a tight-knit organization close to the community and was awarded "All-American" status by the VFW in 2016 but had never had a woman veteran at the helm. As Post commander, Paula has helped to bring youth and families back into the organization by creating a youth activities area at the Post and by extending the list of family-friendly activities hosted by the organization. Paula implemented the first "Buddy Poppy Court" by crowning the youth of the organization and teaching them the historical importance of the buddy poppy flower and empowering them to spend their days as 'royalty' passing along those flowers and the history they have learned.

Paula touches the lives of every age group. She can be found at a variety of events on any given day: hosting a youth sleepover at the Post, singing Happy Birthday to a 100-year-old woman veteran at the Chula Vista Veterans Home, or serving meals at the Veterans Stand Down in San Diego. Paula lives and breathes by the motto "Service First." While she has definitely contributed to the long legacy of the world's largest combat veterans organization, she is also creating her own and blazing a trail for women veterans of the future.

Joel Anderson
Senator, 38th District

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California State Senate

SENATOR
TONI G. ATKINS

THIRTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
HEALTH
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NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER
RULES
TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

Woman of the Year 2018 Vicki Granowitz

Vicki Granowitz has spent two decades bringing communities together. Physical communities. Economically diverse communities. Geographic communities. In her myriad civic leadership roles, she has been a champion for people of all backgrounds, encouraging them to listen, engage and work together to make San Diego – and her North Park neighborhood – a better place for everyone.

She is a member of the San Diego Planning Commission, where she helps advise and oversee planning and development in all neighborhoods of one of the nation's largest cities. In her former role as chair of the North Park Community Planning Committee she led an eight-year successful effort to update the neighborhood's community plan. As a member of the Park and Recreation Board and Balboa Park Committee chair, she worked to ensure all San Diego citizens received the finest park services possible.

Vicki led the formation of the Balboa Park Conservancy. She was a member of the Clean Syringe Exchange Program Facilitation Committee, and she helped with formulating a new redevelopment plan for a key area of Mission Bay Park.

In all her endeavors, she has worked to bring people together - organize, listen and reach consensus. She leads the way with her own desire to balance competing needs and interests – allowing development that blends with neighborhood needs and desires while achieving necessary financial benefits from private investment.

She is as passionate about protecting sensitive canyons and waters as she is about assuring affordable housing for City residents.

Vicki's leadership is highlighted by a sense of grace and certainty that comes from her years as a social worker and counselor – helping families and child victims of sexual abuse. She is motivated by her own personal diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and the sense of well-being she receives from the rewards of improving her community. For all her work, she has been recognized as the 2017 America Planning Association Advocate of the Year for both the State of California and City of San Diego.

With her warm, generous spirit and fierce dedication to community service, Vicki Granowitz is a shining jewel in Senate District 39.



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**SENATOR
BEN HUESO**
FORTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



STANDING COMMITTEES
ENERGY, UTILITIES & COMMUNICATIONS
CHAIR
VETERANS AFFAIRS
VICE-CHAIR
NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
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BILITERACY & DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
CLIMATE CHANGE AND AB32 IMPLEMENTATION
MENTAL HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE
GAS, ELECTRIC & TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Woman of the Year 2018 Sarah Brite Evans

Sarah Brite Evans is a true asset to the 40th Senate District. She moves seamlessly between her professional role as one of San Diego Business Journal's "Best of the Bar", to her civic responsibilities, where she serves as Chair of the Board of Management for the Border View Family YMCA.

Sarah grew up in a small town in rural Kentucky and, when life brought her to San Diego, she was certain to bring with her the sense of community responsibility that she learned growing up. The diversity of South Bay is an integral part of the 40th Senate District, and brings both challenges and opportunities for service. Sarah has prioritized improving the quality of life for people in the region, and creating opportunities for children and families, in both her work and her community service.

During Sarah's tenure as Board Chair, the Border View Family YMCA has dramatically increased its fundraising, enabling it to provide hundreds of additional scholarships that support underprivileged students' participation in sports and community activities. In addition to her work with the YMCA, Sarah serves on the South County Economic Development Council's Workforce and Education Committee. She is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Crawford High School Academy of Law, which serves one of the most diverse populations of students in San Diego, virtually all of whom will be first-generation college students, and many of whom are first-generation Americans.

Sarah has been practicing law in San Diego since 2000, and is currently a partner at the law firm of Schwartz Semerdjian Cauley & Moot LLP. Her practice focuses primarily on employment law matters, including investigating harassment complaints, and training supervisors and managers about the proper ways to address such claims. A core tenet of her work is helping San Diego's business leaders create work environments that protect the rights of women and minority employees to allow them to flourish in their careers. Within her profession, Sarah has been Vice President of the Lawyers Club of San Diego, an organization that is the loudest voice for women's equality within the region's legal community. She is also a three-time winner of the Wiley M. Manuel Award for pro bono legal services.

Sarah lives in Bonita with her husband and two sons. We are beyond grateful for everything that Sarah Brite Evans has done, and continues to do, to strengthen our community here in the 40th Senate District.


BEN HUESO
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